

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Warrior describes baptism, Iraq service

BAGHDAD, Iraq (BP) — One doesn't have to look very far to get a good idea of what Baghdad is like today. Bombed out, burned and looted buildings still line the neighborhoods. Thick, white chalky dust coats everything and sticks in the back of the throat and lodges under fingernails.

To an unknowing observer, this might look like a godless place, but for others Baghdad has become a symbol of what God can and will do for the people of Iraq. It is this faith, for example, that gives hope to the troops that eventually they will head home.

There are no foxholes in this city of five million people. Ask any soldier and they'll quickly tell you there's no defined front line for the war they continue to fight.

Instead, there are mortar attacks and IEDs (improvised explosive devices) to avoid, and a good chance that the car stopped in traffic in front of you could very well be an ambush. Body armor is a common part of the uniform here.

Many acknowledge specific instances during the war when their faith was tested and the question of "Why?" entered their mind.

Sergeant James Crowell from Sayre, Pa., is a scout sniper with the 82nd Airborne, Third Battalion, Second Brigade combat team. Although he grew up in church, it wasn't until he was a few days from entering the war with his unit that he understood what it meant to have a relationship with God.

The chaplain of his unit, Captain Eddie Cook, talked with him about what it means to be a Christian. Crowell recommitted his life to Christ and was baptized by Cook in the waters of the Persian Gulf during a training mission at Falaka Island right before the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It felt like a heavy weight had been lifted off me," Crowell recounted. "This wasn't something I had been considering until Chaplain Cook came and talked to me. I gave it a lot of thought. I love God and I try to live each day like I'm not going to live the next. I know He's got His own special plan for me."

Crowell, who attended Cumberland United Methodist near his base in Fayetteville, N.C., relies on God to get him through the tough days. Only 22, he's seen a lot that others his age have not and he doesn't mince words.

"As a sniper, my job is to kill people," he said softly. "That's the coldhearted reality of it. I remember calling my mom a couple of days before the war started and breaking down in tears. I was more scared about losing one of my buddies than doing my job."

One of the most difficult missions Crowell has taken part in was toward the beginning of the war. As part of his unit was trying to make their way into the city of Al Samawah, he and several members of his platoon had killed a group of Iraqi soldiers who were firing mortar rounds at the advancing troops.



REMINDER — A tank convoy passes through the neighborhoods of Baghdad, alongside a security wall that reminds of the ever-present danger to troops from those wishing ill on the mission of the coalition that freed Iraq from the iron grasp of dictator Sadaam Hussein. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

"All of the sudden, there's this group of about 38 Feyadeen soldiers that come out firing all sorts of ammunition like grenades and rocket launchers [at the gunships]," Crowell recounted. "The helicopters started firing rockets and hellfire missiles at them [and] actually killed a couple of them."

Crowell watched what happened next with shock and disbelief through the scope of his weapon. "The Feyadeen started going to the houses there and bringing out old men and women and children and putting them in a circle around them," Crowell said. "That was five seconds that seemed like an eternity for me, trying to decide what to do. They were already killing the ones who didn't want to stand in the circle, and the helicopters came in and pretty much rocketed the place after that."

He paused, looking down at his boots. "Why were those guys taking innocent people and doing that to them?" Crowell asked, glancing back up. "Women and children and old men. People who are defenseless, just trying to live a life.... [Y]ou kind of stow something like that in the deep dark corner of your heart and hope you never have to see that again."

His chaplain has heard these stories all

too often from the men he serves. He Falcon Forward Base where the 82nd Airborne, Third Battalion is always tries to have located. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

an explanation for them. "We're blessed to live in a free country but with freedom comes responsibility," Chaplain Cook said. "That's why we're here, fighting for freedom and peace. We know, however, that only true freedom and peace comes from God."

Editor's note: Baptist Press correspondent Sara Horn, the author of this article, and photojournalist Jim Veneman were on assignment in Baghdad, Iraq, covering stories of faith among the military and Iraqi Christians there. Their complete coverage while there as well as their wartime coverage while on board the USS Harry S. Truman will be featured in a book edited by Horn and scheduled for release next spring by Broadman & Holman, entitled "A Greater Freedom."

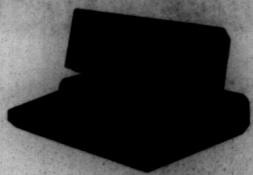


BRIEF PEACE — Sergeant James Crowell from Sayre, Pa., reads his Bible in his tent at the end of a long day of duty in the occupation of Iraq by coalition forces. Crowell, who was baptized in the waters of the Persian Gulf days before the start of the war with Iraq, is a scout sniper with the 82nd Airborne, Third Battalion, Second Brigade combat team. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)



WITNESS IN DESERT — An Iraqi worker named Hammed helps stack cement blocks to be used in a new chapel at the Falcon Forward Base where the 82nd Airborne, Third Battalion is always tries to have located. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

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A better way to spend Black Friday

It's amusing to watch — from a distance. I'm referring to the way people conduct themselves on the day after Thanksgiving — the day that has come to be known as "Black Friday," not for the ominous implications that go along with the word black when used as an adjective, but because of the volumes of black ink the day puts on a store's balance sheet.

Anxious shoppers line up by the hundreds (if not thousands) in the freezing cold of predawn Black Friday, excitedly awaiting the early openings of stores and malls. Manners are often forsaken when the doors are finally unlocked. Angry words and vulgar gestures quickly become the norm.

One television network aired videotape of people actually disrobing in the aisles of a store to try on clothing before anyone else had a chance to buy it.

Helicopters frenetically buzzed overhead, giving traffic updates and parking suggestions to both radio listeners in transit and television viewers preparing to leave the house. Does anyone know the cost per hour to keep a chopper in the air over a mall? Anyway, all the thoroughfares are jammed and there isn't a open parking place in the county.

Despite the drawbacks, Black Friday is electric with excitement and spirit. People with mouths packed full of junk food try their best to describe what the day means to them. Exhausted babies in strollers and grandmothers in jogging suits steal a few winks wherever they can. People with a half-dozen bags as big as projection TV sets make their way slowly and unsteadily through the parking lot.

Just about everyone has a good time — and not one mention of the real reason for the season is ever uttered. Jesus' name is seldom invoked, unless as part of the vilest slang when a shelf is discovered to be empty of a prize acquisition.

That is America today. The humble birth of the Messiah in a Bethlehem stable has become simply another excuse to party (as

if Americans needed another excuse to party). The once-a-year celebration of our Lord's coming into the world, to save the world, is now nothing more than a compulsive shopping spree.

In other parts of the world, people line up in the cold but it's not for Black Friday. They come to hear the Gospel. A Mississippi Baptist recently returned from a winter-time volunteer mission trip to a particularly poor region of the world. He told of visiting a church with no heat, and no pews.

"We had to take the pews out to accommodate all the people," the pastor said. "They don't mind standing in the cold."

When the Mississippian asked why the church's large windows were wide open on such a frigid day, the pastor replied, "So the people outside can hear when the church inside is filled to capacity. They don't mind standing in the snow."

Americans don't mind standing in the snow, but it's not to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's to be first in the store on Black Friday. It's to fill our bellies and empty our wallets. It's to store up our treasures on earth for another year.

What a pity. As a country, we no longer truly understand Christmas. If we are to stand in the snow anywhere, it should be outside the doors to the

"I WAS JUST WONDERING IF THE CHURCH COULD PICK UP SOME OF THE SLACK THIS YEAR. THE NORTH POLE HAS DOWNSIZED AND OUR RESOURCES ARE DYING UP AND THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN STRESSING FAITH-BASED MINISTRY AND ALL."



church. If we are to rush into anywhere with the enthusiasm of Black Friday, it ought to be into church.

If we achieve a state of personal satiety, it should be because we are fulfilling our responsibility as Christian missionaries to take the Gospel to a lost world (Matt. 28:18-20), and not because we shopped until we dropped.

Now, that really would be a more productive way to spend Black Friday — and every other day of the year.

GUEST OPINION:



Prayer, giving vital to reaching lost

By Wanda S. Lee, executive director
Woman's Missionary Union

Baptist missionary to China 1873-1912. When WMU was founded in 1888, one of its first actions was to establish an offering goal of \$2,000 to send two missionaries to help Lottie in China. Over \$3,000 was received in that first-ever Christmas offering — enough to send three missionaries.

While money is vital for the

ongoing work overseas, missionaries consistently say the thing they need most is prayer. Scripture supports their requests with the words of James: "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective" (James 5:16 NRSV).

Learning about the needs of unreached people groups and those who are ministering

among them provides insight to effective prayer. Praying "God bless the missionaries" once you are informed is not specific enough to open these dark places to the light of Jesus Christ. It will take informed, inspired praying to reach our world with the message of salvation.

As you participate in the Week of Prayer events and personal prayer times during this month, would you pray consistently for those working among the unreached people groups? Ask God to grant them an abundance of patience and creativity as they try to establish a credible witness with their group. Ask God to protect them and support them in the difficult places.

Also pray for the people they are trying to reach. Ask God to create openness to the gospel in their hearts. Pray that the Bible will be available in their language so they may know for themselves that God loves them and has a purpose for their lives.

Your informed prayers for missions could be the inspiration you need to give sacrificially this season.



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may know Him
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Marriage amendment touted in Congress

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The move to protect the traditional definition of marriage within the U.S. Constitution took another step forward Nov. 25 when the Federal Marriage Amendment was introduced in the Senate.

Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.) introduced the amendment on the Senate floor exactly one week after the highest court in Massachusetts legalized same-sex "marriage" in that state. The court issued a 180-day state to give the state legislature time to act.

While several senators had expressed support for an amendment in recent months, it had yet to be introduced officially. "This union is sacred and must remain so," Allard said, according to the Rocky Mountain News.

The proposal has four cosponsors, all Republicans: Sam Brownback of Kansas; Jim Bunning of Kentucky; Jeff Sessions of Alabama; and Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma. The proposed amendment now goes before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

This summer Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R-Colo.) introduced the amendment in the House, where it has 107 cosponsors. It needs passage of two-thirds of both the House and Senate and ratification of three-fourths of the states.

So far, Democrats have been cold to the idea, and on Nov. 23 Senate Minority

Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) said he is opposed to an amendment. The Democratic National Committee's website has an entire section on "gay and lesbian" issues where it asserts that an amendment would "force states to discriminate against groups of their own



citizens." Two polls released since the ruling show that more than 60% of Americans oppose same-sex "marriage." Additionally, three major polls this year — all taken before the Massachusetts ruling — showed that between 54-58% of Americans support a constitutional amendment.

The Constitution provides a second method for adopting an amendment that would bypass Congress, although it has never succeeded. In this method two-thirds of the states would call a constitutional convention, where support from three-fourths of the states would be required for an amendment's ratification.

The proposed amendment reads: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the

constitution of any State, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

AFFIRMING DOMA

Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) introduced a resolution affirming the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) on Nov. 25. While non-binding, the resolution would force senators to show where they stand on something that is already law. Signed into law in 1996, the Defense of Marriage Act protects states from being forced to recognize another state's same-sex "marriage."

Nickles' resolution has six cosponsors.

OPPOSITION STRONG

A FOX News poll released Nov. 21 shows that Americans oppose same-sex "marriage" by a margin of 66-25%. The poll of 900 registered voters was conducted Nov. 18-19. Americans also opposed marriage-like civil unions by a margin of 48-44%.

Following the Massachusetts ruling, some members of the media, quoting a Pew Research poll, said that only 10% of the public favors amending the Constitution to ban same-sex "marriage." However, the poll did not ask a yes-or-no question on the subject. Specifically, the poll asked: "Should the U.S. Constitution be amended to ban gay marriage, or is it enough to prohibit gay marriage by law without changing the Constitution?"

Ten percent said the Constitution should be amended while 42% said prohibition by law was enough. There is no federal law banning states from legalizing same-sex "marriage." The Defense of Marriage Act simply says the federal government will not recognize such "marriages" legalized in states. Conservatives fear it will be ruled unconstitutional.

This summer an Associated

Press poll showed support for an amendment at 54% while a FOX News poll showed it to be at 58%.

WAIT ORDERED

The city council of Cambridge, Mass., voted Nov. 25 to support same-sex "marriage" — but to wait until the court-ordered 180 days is expired before issuing licenses. In the days following the decision one city councilman said he favored the city issuing marriage licenses immediately.

Several conservative groups, including the Center for Marriage Law and the Alliance Defense Fund, threatened a lawsuit if the city did not wait.

Jake Flake, the speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, wants his

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body to pass a resolution urging Washington politicians to pass a constitutional amendment. "We hope to be the first state to get this to Congress," he said, according to The Arizona Republic newspaper. Flake will try to fast-track the bill in January, the paper said.

REPELLING CHALLENGES

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty and state Speaker of the House Steve Sviggum want to see a state constitutional amendment passed protecting the traditional definition of marriage. Although Minnesota has a defense of marriage act in law, a constitutional amendment is considered an even stronger protection against a state court ruling.

"We think it will repel any legal challenges here," Pawlenty said, according to the St. Paul Pioneer Press newspaper.

If Massachusetts had such an amendment, the court would not have been able to legalize same-sex "marriage."

Looking back

10 years

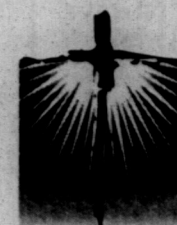
Southern Baptists should increase their missions giving despite inaccurate reports that the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) has all the money it needs, top board leaders say. "If such reports were true, we wouldn't have had to cut our home office staff by 37 positions in 1993," says Jerry Rankin, FMB president.

20 years ago

Billy Graham celebrates his 65th birthday on the site where his evangelistic crusade caught fire at a meeting more than three decades ago. Los Angeles proclaims Billy Graham Day, and politicians join a celebrating throng of about 1000 at the unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

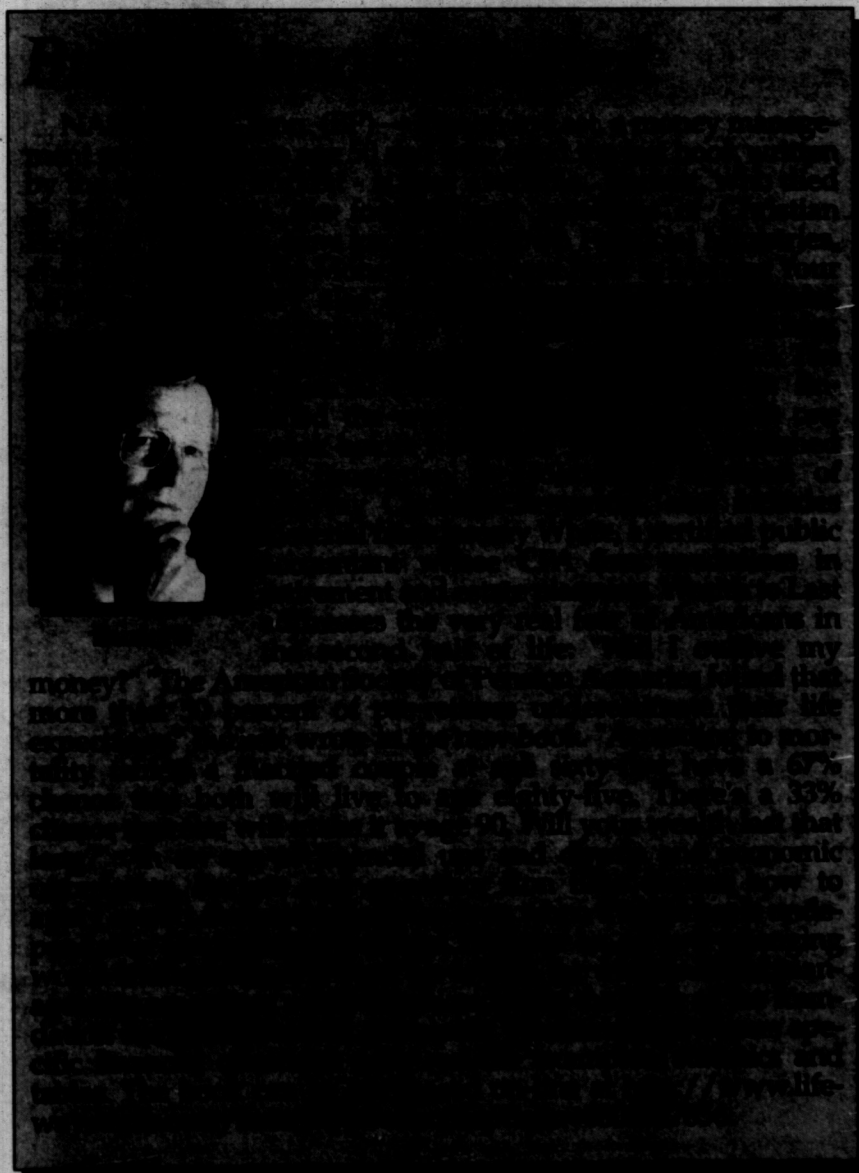
50 years ago

Loyalty Day on Nov. 22 is transformed into Victory Day at First Church, Greenwood, when its membership oversubscribes the budget for 1954 in one day. Subscriptions for the year reached \$71,691.68.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE



MISSION LESSONS AT THANKSGIVING

I've always enjoyed Thanksgiving! Through the years it has been one of my favorite holidays that we celebrate. In part, I love it because of its simplicity. It is wholesome and healthy to stop and think about all of the blessings that God has showered upon us and to thank Him for His goodness, providence, protection, and personal involvement in our lives. Yet, like most things in life, Thanksgiving has become a little more complicated as the years have gone by.

This year we got together with all of our kids and grandkids and it was fun! Then we decided to travel over to Birmingham to see my mother-in-law and spend some Thanksgiving time with her and some of the family there. This would be our first Thanksgiving since the death of my father-in-law and it was the first Thanksgiving for my mother-in-law without him in over 60 years of marriage.

We traveled over to Birmingham and got there just in time for another Thanksgiving feast. Food was everywhere as family gathered with large and eager appetites. Just about the time we sat down to eat, one of the granddaughters arrived with a basket. Now this was not a basket of food. No, it was a basket filled with puppies - five puppies! As a matter of fact, they were only a few days old and they quickly became the center of attention. The reason that the five puppies were brought to the Thanksgiving meal was because the mother of the puppies was old and after giving birth to them was unable to care for them.

It was just about time to have the blessing for the meal and the puppies were ready to eat also. So, as we all filled our plates and began to sit down for the feast, the surrogate mother-granddaughter who had brought them, began to take the puppies one by one and feed them with the bottle she had brought.

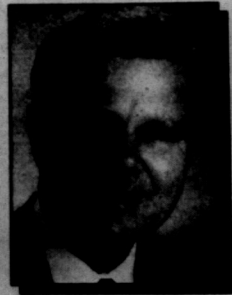
Normally, dogs were not allowed in the house and certainly they were barred from the dining room table, but on this Thanksgiving occasion, they were allowed to stay! All of us watched in amazement as the entire litter was taken care of and the entire Thanksgiving conversation was about the dogs.

For my part, the event became a lesson in missions! How so? Let me explain. Here was a gift that cares. The granddaughter who had the puppies with her told the story of how someone had just dropped off this aging, expectant, but beautiful little old mother dog, and the dog had come to their house - and they cared! When I say "they," I mean the granddaughter and her husband, both of whom have jobs, and their three little boys, all of whom have needs. Yet, she could not believe that someone would do something like that to the poor old mother dog that was barely still alive. Now, she had five little innocent puppies who would not survive to have their eyes opened if someone did not care.

Every year, each of the 365 days that come and go, another 80 to 85 million people come to join us here on planet Earth. Eighty plus million new souls, each of them is dependent upon someone who cares to tell them about the love and the

Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



hope that we have in Jesus Christ. To my knowledge, not one of them asked to be born. They come here with such an innocence believing somebody ought to care! Oh, I'm fully aware that in time we can assess them according to location, color, language, political persuasion, or artificial boundaries and apply our own personal prejudices so that we can keep from caring!

The granddaughter, holding a little furry ball of a puppy and feeding it with a small bottle, wondered how anybody could be so cruel as to not care for these little animals. It is a question that we are driven to ask ourselves when we do not participate in reaching the peoples of the world with God's message of salvation.

The kind of gift I saw at Thanksgiving not only cares, it dares. It dares to reach beyond the limit of needs that we all seem to have and do more. It dares to extend itself, express itself, and to commit to making a difference. One by one virtually everybody in the room except for the one granddaughter, expressed things like, "Not me!" "I wouldn't do that!" "You mean

to tell me that in the middle of the night you have to get up and feed those dogs?" And on and on the comments and the questions went, most coming to the conclusion that they would not dare do that!

Actually, it doesn't take long into a conversation about missions to realize that most of us do not dare to take a risk for the Gospel either. "Do not, under any circumstances, ask me to be pushed out of my comfort zone - to get up, to go, to reach beyond my own limitations, to do something for somebody who has never done anything for me and may never give anything in return!" It's a daring venture to be a part of missions, for unlike the prospects of just possibly seeing some puppies grow up, we have in view eternal rewards and a life-changing harvest! The call of missions reaches to the guts of our commitment to

Christ and requires that we dare to take on the task.

The offering that Southern Baptists participate in annually is named for one of our pioneer missionaries, Lottie Moon. It is hard to imagine a single woman leaving home, family, and every imaginable comfort that comes with her society to say, "I will go into the bleakness, darkness, and lostness of China to share Christ." In 1873, she went on mission with Jesus. For almost 40 years she dared to serve Jesus and share the Gospel with compassion and boldness.

The final lesson that I saw at Thanksgiving in this caring gift was the fact that this kind of giving shares. I don't mean it just gives milk, but it shares a warm touch that will in time bring light to these little puppies and it shares inspiration that there are folks around who still have this kind of heart. Even more wonderful is to think of the hundreds...the thousands of special people in our churches who have hearts that respond to give so "that all people may know Him."

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HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 4, 2003

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

Deacon Ministry Emphasis

Deacon Ministry Emphasis . . .

is a plan with specific actions that highlight deacon ministries and involve deacon training and service.

The Purpose Of Deacon Emphasis Is To:

- ♦ Focus on their biblical role
- ♦ Build team relationships
- ♦ Secure involvement in ministries
- ♦ Develop skills for ministry

Deacon Emphasis Week is scheduled for January 11-18, 2004, but a deacon ministry emphasis may be conducted at any time during the year.

To participate, the deacons would choose at least two actions and perform them during a specified time (preferably during Deacon Emphasis Week). See the possible activities listed below.

A certificate of recognition will be presented to each deacon body that participates.

Suggested Activities . . .

- ♦ Conduct a deacon's retreat or training event
- ♦ Conduct Pastor/Staff Appreciation Day
- ♦ Conduct prayer/planning retreat with church leaders
- ♦ Enter Deacon/Pastor Covenant to work together as partners in ministry
- ♦ Subscribe to *The Deacon* or *Growing Churches* magazine for all deacons
- ♦ Conduct activities to strengthen church fellowship
- ♦ Conduct efforts to reclaim inactive church members
- ♦ Conduct an in-house survey of the local church needs and resources
- ♦ Conduct deacon-led witnessing/visitation/prospect-find activities
- ♦ Assist staff in Discovering Spiritual Gifts study
- ♦ Enter the Deacon Family Ministry Plan
- ♦ Sponsor a special ministry project
- ♦ Sponsor a mission trip or tour
- ♦ Plan and conduct worship service
- ♦ Promote and pray for revival
- ♦ View and study video tapes
- ♦ Develop committee leadership
- ♦ Conduct a demographics study
- ♦ Study deacon resource materials
- ♦ Train worship decision counselors

For other projects and information, contact:

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Keith Gordon, consultant, (601) 968-3800, extension 307, or 1-800-748-1651

E-mail: kgordon@mbcb.org

MISSISSIPPI STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

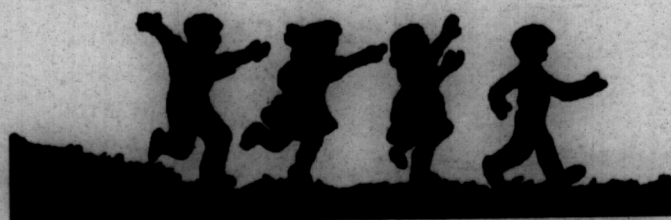
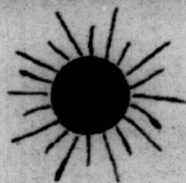
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FBC, Jackson
March 6, 2004

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Don Hicks, consultant
Discipleship & Family Ministry
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1-800-748-1651 or (601) 968-3800 in Jackson
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Name of contact person _____
 Church _____ Phone _____
 Church address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Amount enclosed \$ _____
 # Girls _____ # Boys _____ # Female adults _____ # Male adults _____
 Total # _____

Return this form and \$50 registration for each person to: Frank Simmons,
 Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571-3299
 Phone: (228)452-7261 or Fax: (228)452-7263

Do not mail before February 2, 2004

For more information, contact the Sunday School Department at
 1-800-748-1651, or in Jackson, 601-292-3292, or E-mail jellis@mbcb.org.

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God, make a fresh start in me...
 put a fresh wind in my sails. Psalm 51:10-11 The Message

March 19-20, 2004

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Clinton, Mississippi

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Splash the Living Water

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2004 BAPTIST DOCTRINE STUDY PREVIEW

EDITED BY
 REX YANCEY

BRUNCH AND PREVIEW

January 19

First Baptist Church, Bay

January 20

Via Woods Baptist Church,

Jackson

January 22

First Baptist Church, Starkville

9 a.m. - noon - Cost: \$10

Doctrine of Jesus

Pray this day for...

December 5, 2003 - January 7, 2004

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone (601) 292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1 (800) 787-7729 (PRAY)

"The reason why many are finding prayer so unsatisfactory and the life of prayer so unattractive is because they have attempted to enter into the celestial realm of prayer in the strength of the old man... Christ expects nothing from your flesh."

F.J. Huegel

Pray for the 2,500 self-funded missionaries who serve across North America. They are individuals over 18 who are fire-fighters, nurses, Hollywood talent agents, computer programmers, contractors, and so on living out the call to be on mission through creative, radical, cutting edge options as missionaries.

Missionary Donna Burris reports that the Chinese Baptist Convention in Taiwan has commissioned a couple, Pastor and Mrs. L. to minister in one of the Holston Harvest focus fields, the northeast section of the Pescadore Island series. Pray for this couple as they disciple almost 100 new believers on these islands.

Please pray for missionary Jeri Moore as she seeks to get First Place, a Christ-centered health program, into South African hands. Pray that she can find ways to use this program as a church-planting tool.

Give thanks that the ministry partner and his wife, who were experiencing fear and great stress related to heavy surveillance in their ministry, have experience renewed courage, strength and faith. Your prayers are making a difference in the lives of these workers in dangerous places.

Please pray for the group of leaders from the Quito University Baptist Church in Ecuador that has just completed "The Church in Your House" training. Ask the Lord to help them faithfully continue the groups they have started, now that the formal training time is over.

Cheryl Palmer is the chaplain at Barnes Jewish Hospital, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for the young patients living with cystic fibrosis, and for their families to find God's strength, peace, and hope in the midst of their struggle.

Violence continues to foster an atmosphere of instability in Iraq. Pray that the God of peace and love would quickly put an end to the recurring destruction and loss of innocent lives. Pray that He would comfort those who mourn, and that through these senseless tragedies, He would make His Name known in Iraq.

Please pray for Nathan Crum, a college student living in a remote village of Peru for the fall semester. Pray that he will continue to share the gospel with fervor as he improves in his Spanish speaking. Pray that he will remain healthy and upbeat during the remainder of his time.

For: (1) Youth Evangelism Conference, Mississippi College Coliseum, Clinton, 2 p.m., 29th - 30th, 30th (Evan); (2) Pray that appropriate housing can be found for an Asian Indian seeker of East Africa. This person is in need of a place to stay and has had difficulty finding one.

The Northeastern Province of Kenya is home to many Cushitic people groups. Pray for workers who are using the need for education, water and health care to access these more resistant peoples. Ask God to provide opportunities for witness that clearly communicate the gospel.

Images of the Amazon are lush green mountains, vast rainforests, and spectacular vistas. Here, the rich cultural heritage of the Gajibo people of Venezuela link them to a mixture of spiritualism, animism and Christianity. Pray God for chronological Bible storying, a means to bring the Good News to the Guajibo in their language.

J. is a Kamma believer in South India who attended a Church Planting Movement conference in September. Now he is sharing what he learned among the people with whom he is working. Thank God that there are two house churches that are meeting as a result. Pray that these would be an example and witness to their communities.

As part of the persecution that believers in Chad are experiencing, workers on the field have been restricted from going into certain areas of the country. Pray that they would seek God's will on how that may affect their plans - just as Paul was redirected at times.

Please join the Barrier Breaker Team in asking the Lord of the harvest to direct them to leaders, men and women of honor in Santiago, Dominican Republic, who will use their influence in the professional community to share the gospel.

Henry Blackaby and Avery Willis will be teaching their book, "On Mission With God," in Manila, Philippines, on July 19-26. They will also do several other conferences, including a large one, "Experiencing God Day-by-Day." Thank God for the national believers who have the vision and faith for planning these events.

Pray for the students who are leading several Bible studies and discipleship groups at the University of Sao Paulo Law School in Brazil. This school is where Brazilian students studying to become judges, lawyers and politicians, etc., are found. Pray for the Christian students who are seeking to lead their campus to Jesus Christ as Savior.

Missionaries Alisha and David Holt have recently settled in their new home in Corrientes, Argentina. Pray for them as they seek out pastors and churches that have a vision for planting new churches.

In and around the border town of Namanga, Kenya, the Somali people have gathered and established their own community with an Islamic school, mosque, and way of life. Pray that every Christian who passes through this community would be faithful to share the love of Christ in every way possible.

Mwera people live on the southern coast of Tanzania and mix their Islamic beliefs with traditional African beliefs. There are a few Christians among them, but they are beginning to be persecuted by the people there. Pray for these struggling believers, that they will continue to have a spirit of boldness to share their faith.

For: (1) Baptist Building Staff AT HOME DAYS, 7th - 9th; (2) Nine men who left the majority religion in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to follow Christ are being equipped at a training center. Pray that they can share the Good News multiple times every week, memorize the Scripture verses that are assigned, learn how to start house churches, and train others to do the same.

Pray for the "Lebende Krippe" (live nativity) displayed in the Christmas Market in Amberg, Germany, on December 5-23. Steven and Susan Lett and journeyman Sam Green will be participating every day. They are preparing to hand out over 3,000 tracts. Intercede that this will be an effective means of sharing Christ's love.

English classes have started in several schools in Prague, Czech Republic. Heather Cochran has become the lead teacher of English in four schools in Prague. These English classes are reaching around 100 students each week. Pray for Heather and the other teachers as they seek to find ways to share God's love with the children and their parents.

Pray that on this Christmas Day Christians will celebrate it in a way that will honor Christ. Pray that we will not put too much emphasis on feasting and getting material things but on sharing the good news that Jesus came to be the Savior of the world.

For: (1) Camp Staff Reunion, Camp Garaywa, Clinton (WMU); (2) Pray today for President Ahmad Tej Nkomo of Sierra Leone (Western Africa); (3) Bill Kneisly of Burlington, Kans. praises God for the donation he received as a result of his prayer for the Lord to provide the Blue Stem Truckers Chapel with more New Testaments.

Pray for a 19 year-old young man from north-east Brazil. He is very poor, has only a first-grade education and no training in preaching, yet he is a dynamic young preacher. Pray that God will keep him strong in his faith, protecting him from temptations and detours.

Please pray that God will break down the demonic strongholds that keep Sunnis, Muslims of Lebanon from understanding and receiving God's truth. Pray that there will be a spiritual hunger and that God will pour out His Spirit. Pray for physical protection of the workers.

Praise God for dozens and dozens of American university students who are committed to sharing Christ in China this Christmas. Pray that God will prepare them in every way for the opportunities that lie ahead. Pray that He will also prepare the specific places and individuals that He purposes for impact during this special time of year.

Pray for missionaries Daren and Shawna Davis as they seek to start a Bible study in the small town of Kalebo, Zambia. They have been met with skepticism and warnings in the months since they moved there. Recently, three men approached Daren at three different times on the same day with the same request, "I want to study the Bible with you."

Pray that more churches and Bible studies will be started in Swaziland. Pray especially for the new Bible study in the Ntunwakazi area, that many people will come to hear the message of Jesus' love for them. Pray that those attending this Bible study will see the need to have a church in their area.

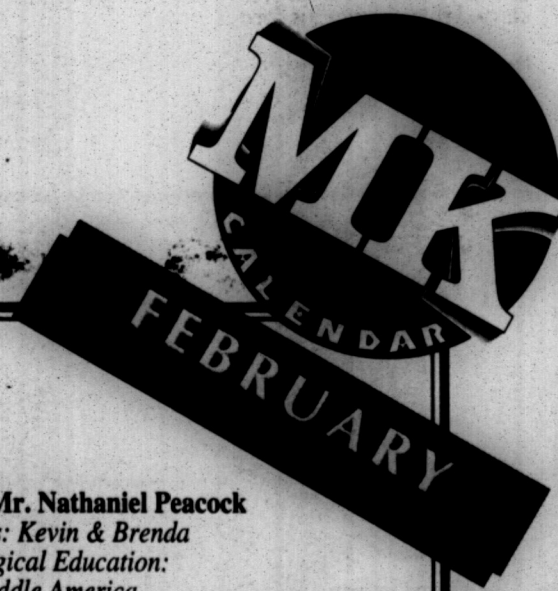
The Guarayos of Bolivia often feel that they must change from their culture to be accepted into society. Pray that they will realize that God gave them their culture and that He wants to meet them in it. Pray that they will fulfill their unique place before the throne of God.

Across Uganda every city, town and even small villages, especially along the paved roads, have at least one mosque urging people to embrace Islam. Pray for the Christians and the churches of Uganda to stand firm in their faith, believing that God will meet their daily needs, and that they will not compromise their beliefs for these needs.

Greg Alexander of Springfield, Ill. is the director of collegiate ministry in Illinois. There are 771,000 students in Illinois and are one of the most unreached people groups in the state. Pray that God will open doors with resources, personnel, and lives so that students will be reached.

Ask the Lord to bless and use T, a Japanese ministry partner of the Impact Japan Team. He spent the summer in the U.S. studying English, training in ministry, and starting evangelistic outreach among Japanese students in a large university. Thank God for two students who accepted Christ and were baptized under T's ministry.

After a seven-month ceasefire, Maoists in Nepal have pulled out of their talks with the government and hostilities have resumed. Plans for ministry in Maoist territory have to be reconsidered, and probably postponed. Pray that God's plans for Nepal will be carried out for this time in the country's history.



For security, cards will be forwarded.
Please send all to:

Child's name and parent's name
MBCB Stewardship Dept.
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205

3-84 Mr. David J. Collins
Parents: Charles & Suzanne
Business Management:
The Caribbean Basin

4-85 Mr. David M. Johnston
Parents: Vincent & Sharon
Church Planting:
Eastern South America

12-02 Miss Alice A. Mullins
Parents: Frank & Lynn
Church Planting:
Western Europe

16-01 Mr. Haddon Bledsoe
Parents: David & Laurie
General Evangelism:
Eastern South America

19-99 Miss Daiane C. Holley
Parents: Marty & Shari
General Evangelism:
Eastern South America

24-94 Miss Abigail L. Packard
Parents: Michael & Sabrina
Church Planting:
West Africa

24-00 Mr. Nathaniel Peacock
Parents: Kevin & Brenda
Theological Education:
Middle America

HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Youth of First Church, Pontotoc

Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will present a Singing Christmas Tree, Fear Not, December 12-14. Times are Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are available now.

For more information, call (601) 924-5620.

Harmontown Church, Harmontown, held a deacon ordination November 9 for Jerry King. Jim Pinkerton is pastor.

Harmontown Church, Harmontown, welcomes their new pastor, James Pinkerton, and his wife, Carolyn. Pinkerton began serving November 3.

Pleasant Hill Church, New Hebron, announces the Florence Middle School Choir Christmas Concert for December 7 at 6 p.m. Refreshments will follow. Laurie Pace is the director. Lloyd Wilson is pastor.

Macedonia Church, Petal, participated in the Challenge to Grow stewardship program directed by Tommy Mitchell. After 40 days of fasting, Bible study, and prayer, church members committed to spiritual and church growth. Members celebrated Hallelujah Sunday with dinner on the grounds following morning worship.



Youth of Beatline Church, Philadelphia

The youth of First Church, Pontotoc, walked door to door gathering over 600 lbs. of canned food items for the local food pantry. This was their project for the ROCK ON mission program. As a result of exceeding their goal, Alan Newman, youth director, got a fresh new color on his hair. Ken Hester is pastor.

The youth of Beatline Church, Philadelphia, recently collected donations from the church and packed 10 shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

The Youth in Action group of Barnes Crossing Church, Saltillo, prepared 18 shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Barbara Parker is the group leader.

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Youth in Action of Barnes Crossing Church, Saltillo

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Congratulations to Dr. O'Mara, Dr. Kilgore and all the Baptist employees whose professionalism, compassion and teamwork earned this prestigious recognition.

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Baptist

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FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC/Education position available. Send resume to psprine@yahoo.com or mail to Rawls Springs Baptist Church, 55 Rawls Springs Road, Hattiesburg, MS

39402. Attention: personnel committee.

ORGANIST, CASTLEWOODS Baptist Church. Send a letter of interest or resume to 175 Stonecastle Drive, Brandon, MS 39047 via mail or fax. Fax (601) 992-2623. For information call (601) 992-9977.

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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Why I Give

2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 7-15, 24

By Ken Anderson

The preacher was emphatic: "an authentic church is a liberal church." Now the word liberal does not roll off the tongue easily nor is received with much sympathy from most people I know. Yet the preacher's audience was enthusiastic. He was encouraging them to be liberal not in politics or theology, but in giving.

Paul also urged the Corinthian Church to be liberals in giving. Paul appealed in his first letter to the Corinthians to collect an offering for Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4). Titus was in charge of collecting the offering, but some problem stopped the process. Now Paul addresses their need to complete the offering they had started (II Cor. 8:6).

THE EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIANS (8:1-5).

Paul showcased the Macedonian churches as models of generosity for the Corinthians to emulate. They had endured deep poverty and persecution. Their trials did not reduce their desire nor did their afflictions diminish their joy in helping others. They gave beyond their ability and Paul's expectations, even pleaded to him for the opportunity. The key to their giving was that they first gave themselves to the Lord and to Paul.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST (8:8-9).

Paul did not use this occasion to issue a command to give. He refrained from using his apostolic authority and did not use the word money in his appeal. Rather he skillfully approached them as "brethren" and commended them for their love (8:1, 7).



Anderson

Christ is the highest example of liberal and gracious giving. He gave Himself (John 3:16). He emptied Himself (Phil. 2:5-11). If the Corinthians could reclaim that grace in their hearts no other incentive would be needed. Paul concludes with some gentle advice for the Corinthians

FOLLOW THROUGH (8:10-12).

He counseled them that it would be to their advantage to follow through with their earlier and earnest intentions of giving. A year had passed since the offering was started. Now it was time to match their intentions with performance. They were advised to give based on what they had, according to their ability, not on what they did not have. The emphasis was on their willingness to give.

GIVE WITH EQUALITY (8:13-15).

The Corinthian church seemed to be critical of the fact that their gifts would leave them destitute while lifting the Jerusalem church

to prosperity. The situation would simply be reversed. Paul's response was that the giving should be one of equality. He did not want one church to be eased while burdening another (8:13). The Corinthian's need of the gospel was met by the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15:27). Now the Jerusalem church's physical needs could be met in part by the Corinthian church. He used the story of the supply of manna in the wilderness as an example (Ex. 16:18). Though some hoarded manna each day, their excess spoiled the next day. To those who gathered small amounts their manna was expanded to meet their daily needs. All of their needs were met equally.

SHOW LOVE (8:16-24).

Paul was sure they would welcome the messengers from the churches to collect the offering. He was confident that the Corinthians would give their gifts not as a duty but as an demonstration of authentic love. Love that would also help unify the Gentile and Jewish Christians.

The key word in the lesson is

grace (8:1,4,7,9). Herschel H. Hobbs wrote that, "grace basically means a gift" (A Layman's Handbook of Christian Doctrine, p. 78). It is God's free, unmerited, and unearned gift that restores his estranged people to Himself. Christ's move from wealth to poverty was an act of grace so that all may be spiritually rich (8:9). The gift of salvation is the ultimate incentive for giving.

The Macedonian churches are striking examples of cooperative giving, and so is the Cooperative Program. A pastor counsels a nine-year-old boy about salvation and the boy is saved. A pastor of a mission church needs financial help and receives ministerial aid from the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Another mission fellowship is established with help from the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. These are only three personal experiences of being on the receiving end of cooperative giving, but personal experience of giving contains numerous more blessings.

Anderson is pastor of First Church, Saltillo.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Responding to Gods Call

Jonah 1:1-12, 17; 2:1-2

By Ann Maniscalco

Nineveh...what comes to your mind when you first hear the word? In all likelihood, you think of a huge city whose inhabitants had sunk to such depths of depravity that God said, "their wickedness has confronted Me" (Jonah 1:2*). Many of us don't immediately think of the populace en masse repenting, resulting in an amazing large-scale revival.

Likewise, when most Bible students hear the name Jonah, they remember his disobedience and rebellion rather than his about-face, enabling him to be God's instrument of this great spiritual awakening in the city numbering more than 120,000 (Jonah 4:11).

JONAH'S REBELLION (JONAH 1:1-3): From 2 Kings 14:23-25, we

learn that Jonah was a prophet - a contemporary of King Jeroboam - about the year 800 B.C. "The word of the LORD came to Jonah" (Jonah 1:1) concerning Nineveh, a city in the Assyrian Empire. Although the inhabitants of this massive city were a very real enemy of Israel, and shook their defiant fists in the face of God, His agape love reached out to them, and He called Jonah to be His spokesperson.

Showing contempt for these people and the call of God, Jonah boarded a ship to Tarshish, thinking He could escape God. There is always a ship and a Tarshish for believers trying to wriggle away from a God-appointed unpleasant task, but the cost of the "ticket" to flee can sometimes be high, as Jonah would soon realize.



Maniscalco

GODS DISCIPLINE (JONAH 1:4-17):

Hebrews 12:6 is a word of warning and encouragement - our Father will get our attention when we stray. He sent a storm and a sea-creature to redirect Jonah. The ram-paging storm terrified Jonah's shipmates, and "each cried out to his god" (verse 5). After not receiving any answer, they called out to Jonah's God (verse 14) before throwing Jonah overboard as he had directed them (verse 11-12).

The great fish God prepared gulped Jonah down, imprisoning the distraught prophet for three days and three nights (verse 17). In this dark, watery pit, Jonah had plenty of time to think and pray. Do you recall times of God's discipline? Like Jonah, you may have felt a hopeless imprisonment. It may have involved interminable days of frustration and defeat, or a discomfiting sense of purposelessness, vague discontent, or fierce trials. My friend, consider such times as God's way of showing his love, His calling you back to a close walk with Him, so He

can shower you with the blessings that come from obedience!

JONAH'S REPENTANCE (2:1-9):

At the end of himself, Jonah prayed to the LORD his God (Jonah 2:1). Graphically describing his miserable circumstances, he prayed scripture after scripture from the Psalms, and as the Word ministered to his devastated spirit, it brought about repentance, praise, and hope in God's mighty deliverance.

God loved the Ninevites, and examples of this love for all people saturate both the Old and New Testament. Our Lord Jesus clearly shared His purpose for coming: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Because of their continued refusal to join the Lord in the task of reaching all people (2 Peter 3:9), many believers are missing out on the abundant life Jesus promised in John 10:10, and will feel the sting of His redemptive chastisement. How much better to willingly - out of love and thanksgiving - allow Him to direct your life! During this time of focus on International Missions, may we examine our

hearts - and with the Spirits help root out unconcern, fear, prejudice, and busy-ness. God has a mission for you, and fulfilling it will bring you - and Him - immense joy!

Jonah doesn't seem quite like the kind of preacher who would have a good resume or references! First, he ran from God and caused great fear and loss of property to his shipmates (1:4-5), he was a man of few words (3:3-4), and he became angry and pouted after God used his brief message to call the people to repentance (3:5-10 and 4:1-3). However, as I ponder these character facts and foibles, I take heart! I am reminded that if God can - and actually wants to - use such a person as Jonah to accomplish His purposes, then there is hope for me, with my failings and moments of doubt and rebellion. When I am repentant, my loving Father will pick me up (Luke 15:11-24), dust me off (1 John 1:9), and send me on my way - His way (Psalm 51:1-2,12-13).

*All references are from the HCSB.

Maniscalco is member of First Church, Ocean Springs.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to accept news and photographs of special interest. News items will be accepted for consideration in cooperation with the International Baptist

News Service. News items should be submitted to the editor, Baptist Record, 1000 N. 1st St., P.O. Box 1000, Tallahassee, FL 32301. News items should be submitted in a clear, concise, and readable format. News items should be submitted in a clear, concise, and readable format. News items should be submitted in a clear, concise, and readable format.

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News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be con-

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's

clear, sharp, and well-lit. News items should be submitted in a clear, concise, and readable format.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Bill Causey, Interm Executive Director

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(601) 922-2242

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

AUGUST 1 - 31, 2003

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DELIVERING GIFTS — Rev. Dwayne Parker of FBC Flora hands shoeboxes to members of FBC Cleveland as both churches deliver shoeboxes to the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child relay center at The Baptist Children's Village.



SORTING THROUGH BOXES — Heather and Camille, both residents of The BCV, sort through some of the 3,200 shoe boxes delivered to the relay center. These girls and other residents are learning this holiday season that it is truly more blessed to give than receive. Operation Christmas Child is a project of international relief organization Samaritan's Purse.

The Baptist Children's Village
is looking for singles or couples for
the position of Childcare Worker.
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Please contact Peggy Taylor at
601-922-2242 or
ptaylor@baptistchildrensvillage.com

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DTC MCR JHTYKHTC,
IKLWRHTC VA YKT EYVIG
VA MJHMKMD, MCR
QKVEVTPTH MDVCB NVO
ATMHYK BVR, YV NVO
LE YKT QVHR VA YKLE
EMWPMYLVLC ETCY.
MIYE YKLHYTTC:
YQTCYN-ELZ

Clue: L = I

Have fun with cryptography
and exercise your Bible knowl-
edge. A King James Version
Bible verse has been encoded
by letter substitution. The same
letter is substituted throughout
the puzzle. Solve by trial and
error. Answer to last week's
puzzle: Romans 10:4

Speakers: Prepare to witness to Mormons

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — "We are here to give you the tools to share Jesus," Dennis Higley said in setting the tone for a Mormon Awareness Conference at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City. Higley and his wife Rauni founded HIS (He Is Savior) Ministries International in 1982, an organization dedicated to helping Mormons who have questions about their faith.

Other speakers included James Walker, president and CEO of Watchman Fellowship, an evangelical cult-watch organization; Phil Roberts, president of Midwestern Seminary; Tal Davis, North American Mission Board interfaith evangelism manager; Cky Carrigan, North American Mission Board interfaith evangelism national missionary for the Atlantic Coast; and Austin Morris, president of LifeLine Ministries.

The two-day conference relayed a basic background of Mormon beliefs, focusing on their understanding of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the plan of salvation. "These are foundational topics that Christians need to know" in order to reach Mormons, Higley noted.

A former sixth-generation Mormon, Higley is a descendant of one of the church's founding members. His wife Rauni was a nominal Lutheran before she converted to Mormonism in her native Finland in 1963.

Those who attended the mid-October Midwestern Seminary conference got a rare insight into temple ceremonies reserved only for temple-worthy Mormons.

Rauni estimated that during their two decades with the LDS church she and her husband had performed hundreds of ceremonies. "This is still spooky to me," Rauni said. "This is something that I have goose bumps all over me because it's very difficult.



WITNESSING OPPORTUNITY — Summit Church in downtown Salt Lake City recently opened a coffee house as a way to connect with the multitude of Mormons in the area and share their Christian witness with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. A recent conference at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City cited ways to open doors for witnessing to Mormons. (BP photo)

Walker said he cannot overemphasize the importance of evangelizing Mormons. To those caught in the deception of the Mormon church, Walker said, it is the responsibility of Christians to speak the truth in love.

The most important tool is developing relationships, Walker said. "You can have all the information in the world but if you haven't won the right [to witness], then you're not going to nearly have the impact."

The Mormon church currently claims a membership of seven million worldwide and 60,000 missionaries. The growth of the LDS church is one of many reasons why Christians must be well-versed about the LDS church, Walker said. "If you equip yourself and learn about Mormon terminology and doctrine, God will give you the opportunity to use it in a practical way — miraculously," he added.

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